

Research Project Title:

**Hoaxes and dissemination of false information.  
Research on the (in)security of false information  
online and the technical / financial dimension of the  
phenomenon.  
Legal treatment and ‘de lege ferenda’**

**Principal Investigator:**  
Fotios Spyropoulos

**Popular Title:**

Dissemination of false information on the internet

**Scientific Field:**  
Social Sciences

**Host Institution:**  
University of West Attica



**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

This project refers to the criminal and criminological approach of the phenomenon of false information dissemination on the internet and social media, in the form of hoaxes, and the provision reformation of article 191 of the Greek Penal Code, regarding the dissemination of false information online.

The fundamental aim of the project is examining the appearance and development of fake news and hoax practices, up to their current aspects, for developing the appropriate conceptual background, the necessary theoretical and technological foundations, for conducting further investigation; of course taking into account the right of online free expression, as it is found in national and international legal instruments.

Then, a criminological approach with regard to the motives and aims of those who resort to such practices, will be thoroughly exposed. One of the main elements of the analysis to be carried out, relates to the legal treatment of online hoaxes by the current legislation at a national and European level. A principal field of investigation is the behavior of Internet users, especially the credulity or incredulity to information in cyberspace, their emotional involvement with social media etc. For this reason, a survey (qualitative-quantitative) on a sample of users of social media will be carried out.

Under this research, requirements and directions will be defined in order to update the provision of article 191 of the Greek Penal Code, if it is considered as necessary, regarding: the role of the Internet and information systems in general in the dissemination of false information, where concrete proposals for the reforming of this provision will be made. Finally, measures for the relevant anticrime policy, focused on innovative crime-prevention legal policies at a national and international level, will be proposed.

Online messages are disseminated anonymously, with much greater dispersion and speed across borders. These internet features can create greater insecurity in public life, because of fake news or a "hoax" to such an extent, that even vital infrastructure of states may be threatened. Additionally, the economic benefits that may result from such practices are a matter of exploration and delimitation. This phenomenon requires scientific interdisciplinary exploration.

The scientific appeal and innovation of the project is important as hoaxes, particularly on the internet, are a new phenomenon, completely unrecognized at the legal level, even by the pioneering European texts and legislation on cybercrime. In addition, apart from legal science, dealing with hoaxes has to do with computer science and marketing - as a technical but also an economic phenomenon - which also demonstrates the economic, social and scientific impact of the project.

“



HFRI funding for this project is an incentive for its implementation, as resources are made available to the scientist responsible for its proper implementation. These resources have not so much to do with the financial support of the scientific supervisor in itself, but moreover the possibility of employing and remunerating specialized scientists in the subject, as members of a research team; without HFRI funding they would not have been able to work for the project. In addition, HFRI support, even with the communication of scientific work, can increase its impact on scientific thinking and society, a result which in the case of a post-doctoral research, conducted by the post-doc researcher alone and without these collaborations, may not have materialized to such an extent.

*The Principal Investigator,  
Fotios Spyropoulos*

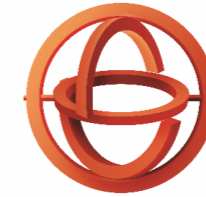
## Funding

Amount: **150,000 €**

Duration: **36 months**

Foundation: **H.F.R.I.**





**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

## CONTACT

185, Syggrou Ave. & Sardeon St. 2

17 121 Nea Smyrni, Greece

[info@elidek.gr](mailto:info@elidek.gr)

[www.elidek.gr](http://www.elidek.gr)



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF  
DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENTS

**GSRT**

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR  
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY